

VZCZCXRO4222
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSA #2791/01 2200515
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 080515Z AUG 07
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1128
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
INFO RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 4674
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 9049
RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 7198

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PRETORIA 002791

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/PCI, OES/ENV, AND AF/S
DEPT PASS EPA/OIA,

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [SOCI](#) [ETRD](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY MONTHLY BRIEFINGS, JULY 2007

PRETORIA 00002791 001.2 OF 003

11. (U) Summary: This is the South African Environment, Science and Technology Monthly Briefings newsletter, July 2007, Volume 2, Number 4, prepared by the U.S. Embassy Pretoria, South Africa.

Topics of the newsletter:

-- PREDATOR BREEDERS INSTITUTE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST SA GOVERNMENT

-- SOUTH AFRICA MUST FIGHT AGAINST THE "TERRIBLE TWINS" - DESERTIFICATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

-- TIRE MANUFACTURERS UNDERTAKE CO2 DECREASING INITIATIVES

-- EDUCATORS ENCOURAGED TO TEACH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

-- CADMIUM DETECTED IN EXPORT PINEAPPLES - INDUSTRY COULD LOSE JOBS AND MILLIONS OF RAND

-- GIANT SA STEEL PRODUCER MAY FACE PROSECUTION FOR GROSS POLLUTION

-- MINISTER ADMITS THAT CRIME IS A THREAT TO TOURISM IN SA

-- SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES DEVELOP AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES

End Summary.

PREDATOR BREEDERS INSTITUTE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST SA GOVERNMENT

12. (U) The South African Predator Breeders Association (SAPBA) made an urgent application to the Bloemfontein High Court against the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's (DEAT) Biodiversity Act, claiming the Act improperly imposed stricter regulations on the hunting of captive raised animals or "canned hunting". The South African government (SAG) and some animal activists groups claim that this type of hunting is cruel and unethical, which is what prompted the SAG to amend the law. The predator breeders on the other hand argue that game hunting is an important, legitimate and lucrative business which makes a meaningful contribution to the economy. They asserted that overseas-based prospective hunters are willing to pay up to \$60,000 to shoot a lion.

13. (U) Leigh Fletcher of Sandhurst Safaris said Sandhurst is a well-known brand and that the enforcement of the new regulations would seriously harm their business and the industry. Since June 1, prospective hunters have been hesitant to make hunting reservations, leaving the breeders with too many lions, which are expensive to maintain. According to SAPBA and some individual breeders, people would lose jobs and business opportunities if the law were to be enforced. Hunting farm owners claim they provide more jobs than the local cattle farmers. They also say that local residents breed

donkeys that are subsequently sold to the farmers to feed the lions.

Breeders are requesting a court order to suspend the date of implementation of the Biodiversity Act in relation to the lions, and allow breeders to continue to breed lions under provincial ordinances. The Act also requires the animals to have been released into the wild at least 24 months prior to being hunted, to which SAPBA is strongly opposed. The Act was intended to come into force in June, but implementation has been rescheduled to February 2008 at the request of some provincial environmental ministers.

SOUTH AFRICA MUST FIGHT AGAINST THE "TERRIBLE TWINS" - DESERTIFICATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

14. (U) Addressing a climate change and desertification conference in Kwa-Zulu Natal in late June, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) Rejoice Mabudafhasi said that desertification is a serious problem which threatens South Africa's ecological integrity and the well-being of its people. Mabudafhasi referred to desertification as "the terrible twin" of climate change, which impacts severely on the poorest of the poor. The Deputy Minister urged South Africans to establish projects to combat the "scourge" of the terrible twins and warned that agricultural production, energy, human health and water supply would be subjected to great risks if intervention mechanisms were not put in place. According to Mabudafhasi, DEAT has introduced eight pilot projects under the Community Based Natural Resources Management Program in the provinces of Eastern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Limpopo. The projects are designed to rehabilitate land and fight land degradation at an estimated cost of \$5.71 million.

TIRE MANUFACTURERS UNDERTAKE CO2 DECREASING INITIATIVES

15. (U) A tire manufacturing company in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape province (EC), Continental Tyres South Africa (CTSA) promotes and supports initiatives to dispose of scrap tires in an environmentally friendly way in South Africa. CTSA sends all of its waste products and scrap tires to a cement brick manufacturing plant in Jeffrey's Bay EC, where they are used to fuel cement furnaces. CSA Managing Director Claudio Boeizio opines that it makes more sense for them to recycle the scrap tires in a cement furnace than to dump them in

PRETORIA 00002791 002.2 OF 003

landfill sites, which CTSA has not done in the last six years. He said that with the right government assistance and support, South Africa's natural environment could be protected in a way that also enhances manufacturing industries. A non profit -company established by major industry stakeholders, SA Tire Recycling Project is leading an initiative to impose a levy on vehicle tires, in order to collect and dispose of scrap tires in an environmentally friendly way.

16. (U) The CTSA MD said that his global parent company is in the process of developing tires and other products designed to reduce fuel consumption and traffic-related carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

Product development is focused on optimizing tire rolling resistance, tire pressure monitoring systems and engine control units, thus decreasing fuel consumption. Boeizio stated that calculations indicate that tires are under-inflated by 12 percent in the US alone, which increases diesel fuel consumption by almost four billion liters, generating over nine billion tons of CO2 which could be avoided. Tire pressure monitoring systems can cut down emissions significantly and help to fight global climate change. Meanwhile, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism has published for comment draft waste tire regulations which are expected to be enacted later this year.

EDUCATORS ENCOURAGED TO TEACH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

17. (U) The South African National Parks (SANP) cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge manager Edgar Neluvhalni said that people should be encouraged to understand more about indigenous knowledge (IK), which will help them deal with environmental challenges. Neluvhalni was addressing attendees to the World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC) in Durban in early July. He said there are many African people who still believe that learning about agriculture and the environment from books is both boring and foreign. However, his research shows that environmental knowledge is not necessarily unique to the teachings of the western world. For example, the parks manager found in his research that IK included methods to treat and prevent contagious diseases.

18. (U) Prof. William Scott of the University of Bath said that many

environmental education researchers are still publishing their work in specialist journals as opposed to mainstream publications accessible to all people. He sees this as an opportunity for environmental educators to "come in from the cold."

Presenting a different approach to environmental education, three Danish schools organized six-day-long environmental programs for children 7-14 years old. According to Prof. Bjarne Jensen of the Danish University of Education, the children tackled real life environmental issues. They were encouraged to imagine how they wanted their communities to change, which resulted in a wave of letters to village councils and newspapers requesting new play grounds and stricter speed limits near schools. WEEC is exploring ways to incorporate indigenous IK into the school curriculum, treating agriculture, education, environment and health as the focal points.

CADMIUM DETECTED IN EXPORT PINEAPPLES - INDUSTRY COULD LOSE JOBS AND MILLIONS OF RAND

19. (U) Pineapple Association Chairman Allen Duncan said that traces of the heavy metal cadmium were found in canned pineapples shipped to Switzerland from South Africa. Cadmium content of 0.05 parts per million was discovered in 100,000 tons of canned pineapples. Pineapple farmers believe the cadmium originated in fertilizers imported from China. According to Duncan, the industry normally produces over 140,000 tons of pineapple per year, 80 percent of which is exported. The industry can export only 40,000 tons this year because of the contamination, forcing producers to look for markets elsewhere. Meanwhile the situation poses a serious threat to the pineapple industry where an estimated \$10 million and over 2,500 jobs, mainly in rural areas, could be lost. Duncan said that farmers will bring legal action against the country's largest chemicals producer, Omnia Chemicals, and its subsidiary, Protea Chemicals, which import Chinese fertilizers. The two companies were sued for about \$17 million two years ago for supplying contaminated chicken feed.

GIANT SA STEEL PRODUCER MAY FACE PROSECUTION FOR GROSS POLLUTION

10. (U) The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) has produced a report revealing environmental law violations by the giant steel company AcelorMittal in Gauteng province. The report is the result of a May assessment by DEAT environmental management inspectors (Green Scorpions). The inspectors found that AcelorMittal was dumping hazardous waste in prohibited landfill sites, thus polluting surface and groundwater with iron, oil, and fluoride. DEAT Director of Enforcement Melissa Fourie said steps would be taken against the company, possibly to include criminal prosecution because of repeated violations in spite of several warnings by authorities. Samson Mokoena of the local environmental group Steel Valley Crisis Committee said that his organization is pleased with DEAT's action. He noted that AcelorMittal had not shown respect for the local population or the environment because it

PRETORIA 00002791 003.2 OF 003

had ignored the pollution concerns they had raised. AcelorMittal CEO Rick Reato said that, although he had not seen the Green Scorpions report, the company would cooperate with authorities. He noted that the company had spent over \$65 million on environmental projects in 2005 and 2006, and has committed over \$142.85 million for the next four years.

MINISTER ADMITS THAT CRIME IS A THREAT TO TOURISM IN SA

11. (U) Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Martinus Van Schalkwyk has conceded that crime is a serious threat to tourism in South Africa. He made the statement while addressing the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry. He noted that after value-for-money, safety and security is the second most important factor for foreign tourists, according to a 2005 South Africa Tourism (SAT) brand tracking survey. The SAT report revealed that although the country was a favored tourist destination, 34 percent of people in the market cited fear of crime as a reason for not visiting South Africa. This indicated crime was a serious deterrent to potential visitors. Van Schalkwyk said that the tourism industry is trying to increase the number of visitors to 10 million by 2010 (from 8.4 million in 2006), which will require heightened efforts to protect tourists. He said that his department is talking to the Safety and Security department about establishing units within police stations to deal specifically with tourism-related crimes.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES DEVELOP AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES

¶12. (U) Angola, Namibia and South Africa have jointly put together a plan to reduce the effect of commercial fishing fleets in Southern Africa waters. The Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem plan (BCLME) was released in Cape Town in late July, and is regarded by experts as a practical way to implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF). Recent studies in Southern African regional fishing grounds have revealed risks to the environment and marine resources, including an impact on seabirds, sharks and tuna through the removal of fish they would normally feed on. Light and heavy fishing gear also negatively affects vulnerable and slow breeding species like sharks, turtles and sensitive sea life at the bottom of the ocean. BCLME is aimed at protecting and managing marine resources and the environment. The Chief Technical Advisor of BCLME Dr Michael O'Toole said that the plan gives a clear and practical strategy to implement an EAF.

¶13. (U) Meanwhile a representative of Worldwide Wildlife Fund of South Africa (WWF) Samantha Peterson noted that, while stakeholders have been willing to implement an EAF, they did not know how to do it. Now the report "will help show how to turn willingness into action". However, the implementation effort will require support from all stakeholders in the fishing industry. The plan may also require changes in fisheries regulations and create new governance structures to allow effective participatory decision-making. Minister of DEAT Marthinus Van Schalkwyk stated that government has to exercise a delicate balancing act to ensure that fishing rights are allocated in a sustainable way, in order to safe-guard the survival of specific fisheries. He also noted that while over-fishing remains a problem, fishing is the only source of income for some people.

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